



Modesto And The Rest Of California

In Modesto we were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Rachel Boone; at the same time they were also hosts to Miss Lee Bostwick, a VILITITE from Grass Valley who just returned from a vacation in the Hawaiian Islands. Our stay in Modesto was enjoyable and of new experiences. We were taken on a tour to the "Mother Lode" country where a hundred years ago the locality was teeming with gold diggers like ants around an ant hill. Sections and towns with lurid pasts are now, for the most part, ruined, desolated and only a name. Sonora still retained all the charm of an interesting and a neat city. Columbia, which was once the Queen City of the mining region, is one of the eye-sore type of slums, and neglected ruin. The State took it over and plans to retain it in its present condition. There are a great many things of historic interest in Columbia still standing, perhaps more than in any other section of that once famous area of a glamorous past. We also enjoyed our visit to the Winery in Modesto where the Gallo wines are created. a huge place where some of the cellars contain as much as over two hundred thousand gallons of wine! There were cellars and cellars, as big as gasoline tanks. The entire wine making process with its creation of various brands, was extremely interesting. I'm extremely grateful to Charles Crawford, who is also a VILITIS reader for his hours spent showing us around and for his very generous gift of a large assortment of fine wines (I hasten to assure my good friends that I'm neither a sot nor a drunkard and the wines will not be guzzled down in a wild spree—or something). From there we went to a "freezery", where my host, Mr. Eugene Boone, is employed. There, I observed the process of refrigeration of string beans. I was amazed at the extremely careful scrutiny the beans go through before being packed. I thought it almost much too meticulous, but that's the way it should be.

Thanks to Mrs. Rachel Boone, we have many VILITIS readers in Modesto, more than in any other single community in California; therefore, we had many grand friends, all being most receptive and wonderful to us. We had splendid feasts at the homes of Mr. and Mrs. Galen Hartwich, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Smith and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Crawford. We also enjoyed a swim in the private pool of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Starn. It was nice meeting many of these wonderful folks and I'm sure thrilled for the opportunity in Modesto, in which city I conducted two sessions and one at the fair in Turlock, 14 miles south of Modesto, the melon center. Thanks again to all, and particularly to my hosts, the Boones.

We left Modesto past midnight, traveling through the night to reach Redwood city where we slept for a few hours at the home of Mr. and Mrs. George Murton (he—the president of the California federation). We rose at seven to have breakfast with the Murtons and my friends, Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Wills. From there we rushed to Bondy's of Belmont to present a radio program which is conducted by Mildred Buhler. We had a second breakfast and then rushed to Colma for dinner with Mr. and Mrs. William Stuersel, he, a friend of mine from Fairhope, Alabama. We had a grand meal and a wonderful visit, but we had to rush to Berkeley, to eat some more, supper with the Hungerfords. My former

Chicago buddies, Mrs. Brilliant and son, Bill, were also guests of the Walter Hungerfords, and another wonderful day of visiting with old friends, pleasant recollections and delicious feasting, ended.

On the 14th (August) I had a class at Stanford U. Prof. and Mrs. Carl Duncan took us out to a very lovely spot in Las Atlas where we dined in elegant rustic atmosphere. From there we took the Skyline drive to San Francisco. As we approached S. F. it reminded me of the biblical period when the Egyptians were plagued for not letting Israel go — it was light and lovely on one side and dreadfully black on the other side. We finally ran into the darkness and it was the worst I've ever encountered. The cloud was so dense and furious that no sand storm in the pan handle states, or snow storms in Greenland could compete with the fury of this "mere vapor" Visibility was practically nil. We were doing 15 miles an hour. The last two days of our stay, however, were very lovely. "Freezco" tried to impress me that it could be warm too, if it only wanted to.

My stay in California had to be cut short because of my scheduled trip to Mexico. I only had a few sessions: with Madelynne Greene one, Changss at Stanford and Sunnyvale. I saw my relative Al Azukas twice and went to the hospital to visit Virgil Morton, that was about all we had time for while in San Francisco. The Hegira south started. Cutting through the peninsula via Los Gatos to Santa Clara (charming country) we reached Watsonville and the home of Milicia Ristich for breakfast. There I found another Yugoslav associate of mine of many years ago — Miss Duska Rychly, I sure was happily surprised to find her there.

Salina was our next stop for dinner at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ace Smith, and whom do we find there? Lawton and Sally Harris and their boy! It sure was good to see them again and so unexpectedly.

Passing through Monterey we stopped in Carmel to see the Mission and raced right on through rough and rugged misty coastal terrain to reach San Luis Obispo. We discovered that a folk session was going on at the College under the auspices of our "girl friends" Genevieve Dexter and Heidi Schmidt. We got in on a pleasant evening. The following day we were in Los Angeles.

Because we barely stayed two days in Los Angeles and two teaching sessions thrown in, which has cut even deeper into the free time for visiting, I paid a brief visit to the John Kranchus family in Long Beach and to the Anthony Skirius family in Hollywood and one dinner at the home of the Oscar Libaws — delicious Hungarian style cooking. My sessions consisted—one of Polish dances only with various leaders at the studio of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Erfer and one with the Federalists of Southern California. We left immediately after the afternoon session for Arizona, passing the desert through the night.

Arizona — Someplace Yonder.

In Arizona we saw more Cacti than one could imagine in his wildest dreams. The Arizonans claim their thorny state has 1500 species with each one in the billions. They can have them. We went through one State Park of Cacti near Tuscon, which was really a sight: giant Saguaro, Nopal, Ocotillo, Chollo, Century Plant, Yucca and alltypes of barrel and pincushion varieties. Sure would not want to get lost there. But one easily can Arizonans are not ones to mark or be specific about anything. They know "from nothing" even if they live "next door to it". We went to hunt for the famous

MISSION SAN XAVIER DEL BAC



Two views of one of the prettiest missions in United States, indeed, "the white dove of the desert". It is located on the Papago Indian reservation 9 miles south of Tuscon, Arizona. The mission was originally built for the ancestors of the present Papagos and it contains art work in paintings and statuary also made by the Indians in the year 1797. This picture was supplied by Miss Julia Kaupas, who, as a WAC, spent many weekends at the convent.

Indian cliff writing and inquired of the store keeper living at the road branching off to that park and she didn't know exactly where it was. The signs just give a general direction but nothing definite. After chasing around for hours we gave up. In Phoenix we asked several people where their pride and joy Heard museum was located; none seemed to know, but one sweet thing "reckoned it's some place yonder" (never heard of the Heard museum), finally, after we did find it, the "durn" place was locked for the summer. We were also on such a wild goose chase to get to the San Xavier Del Bac mission located outside of Tuscon on the Papago Indian reservation. Once we got there it was really something worth while to see; one of the loveliest and most interesting missions I've yet seen. It was completed in 1779 and is still used by the Pima and Papago Indians.

Phoenix and Tuscon are very beautiful cities, particularly the latter. I sure would love to visit it again.

I'd like especially to be there during the spring when all the desert land of cactus is in bloom. I'm sure it is something to behold. Arizona surprised me by being well cultivated and green inspite of its terrific heat. New Mexico, which we cut through in order to get to El Paso, Texas, was not quite as intriguing as Arizona. In El Paso we met Chicagoan John Hobgood who joined us (Francis Hanson and myself) for our Mexican tour.

Peregrinons En Mexico (Pilgrim To Mexico)

Observations during my Mexican tour are being described in a series of separate articles appearing in this and subsequent issues of VILITIS. We covered nearly 3000 miles, going over roads and to sections of the country where no sane American would have dared to go, but having more nerve than brains we traversed over them, regretting ever doing it and pledging "Never again", but we were on another such road soon after the pledge was uttered, etc, etc. We wore out three tires and came back broke and without a spare. No regrets are expressed. To me it was one of the most enjoyable and exciting tours with each moment jam-packed with thrill and excitement. My knowledge of Spanish turned out to be of greater use than I ever anticipated. People were friendlier and I was able to make personal friends and to be taken into their homes and courtesies extended with friendship and not with superficiality. My main interest was sightseeing — museums, shrines, churches, pyramids, people and the visiting of my dream cities: Guadalajara, Uruapan, Patzcuaro and Tlaxcala.

Our last 122 kilometers from San Fernando to Reynosa and into the U.S. were truly made with our tongues in our mouth and prayers on our lips — praying to Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose decal we had on our window, to see us through it. It was a question of whether to go on paved road to Matamoros and Brownsville, or (since our money was running low) to take the unpaved road and save about a hundred miles and get to the U.S. as soon as possible. We took the side road. The further we went the worse it got. No sign of life whatever — no water, no gasoline stations and "no nothing", but miles from nowhere. If a blow-out occurred we would have been stuck and out of luck. We, thanks to God, finally reached our destination and we headed directly for San Antonio where we arrived late Saturday night, Sept. 2.

Texas, The "Biggestest and Bestest"

I had a few personal checks made out to me, but no one would cash them. The only person I knew in San Antonio, Juan Hidalgo, who directs CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) work, left for his vacation only two days earlier. We were stuck for two days, over Sunday and Monday, which was Labor Day. We bought food in a grocery store and went to the Park to eat. San Antonio is a beautiful city, one of the few interesting cities with plenty charm, but, alas, it didn't do us to much good. One would think Texas being such a rich Oil State they wouldn't be so miserly, but you couldn't move in Texas without paying. Admissions were charged to anywhere one wanted to go, the zoo, reptile houses, missions, museums, etc. There was a great deal to see in San Antonio and we had two days of it (but no money), therefore, beyond the Alamo, the parks — which were free — and the museum for which we had to pay (begrudgingly) admission, we could not see anything.

San Antonio, like the rest of Texas, brags like a trooper. There is nothing in San Antonio that is "modest", everthing is the largest, widest, tallest, deepest, biggest, only, or, "one of the" above. I wouldn't